

12th All-American Council – The Orthodox Church in America

Church-Wide Initiative Proposals

Expansion of Witness and Communication Ministries

Proposal Summary

To expand the operations of Witness and Communications Ministries through training and equipping of clergy and laity, through extended resources, workshops, and consulting with the intent on increasing the witness of local communities.

Statement of Condition/Problem

The Orthodox Church in America has long recognized and the preeminent need and to communicate and interpret the teachings, the life and the spirituality of Orthodox Christianity to Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. Included is the particular need to communicate the position of the Orthodox Church in America on contemporary issues in society and culture both to the faithful and to the general public.

Since being established in 1991, fulfilling mandates of the 7th and 8th All-American Councils, the Office of Communications has focussed its efforts on providing communication and public relations support to the Church's administrative programs, offices, and ministry units. Despite the Office's efforts to provide public relations assistance on the local level, its efforts have been limited because the Office functions on a part-time basis due to limited funds.

With the advent of the "information age" and new technologies, the need for improved and expanded communications is obvious. The new technologies have provided increased opportunities for witness and evangelism on regional and local levels. While there are local initiatives in response to these new opportunities, clergy and laity alike require training and support to take advantage of the witness and missionary potential of these opportunities.

Statement of Goal/Objectives

1. To increase and improve media and public awareness, understanding and perception of our local parishes, which will increase the outreach ministry on the local level.
2. To increase public and media awareness of the Orthodox Church in America, particularly on the local level, which will improve public perception and understanding of our faith.
3. To expand the current staffing and operations of Witness and Communications in order to respond systematically to the expressed needs of

parishes for the equipping of clergy and laity for purposes of the witness of the Church.

Proposal Plan

The ability to respond to the need for systematically equipping parishes for witness and communication in their local areas and regions will require the following:

1. Further develop the Orthodox Church in America's web site to include areas devoted to Witness and Communication ministries, providing parishes with links and scheduling of workshops and seminars.

2. Develop public relations tools and resources for use by parishes and deaneries.

3. Develop a training program and resources for clergy and lay leaders on Witness and Communication ministries with appropriate curriculum, locations and dates.

4. Develop multi-media to provide state of the art presentation of materials at all workshops and seminars.

5. Initiate periodic reviews of the creation, use, and expansion of web sites and their use by parishes, deaneries, dioceses, and the Church as a whole, as well as the Church's various ministry units.

6. Utilize existing Church gatherings for Witness and Communication workshops.

Proposal Evaluation

An evaluation process must be put in place to observe the demonstrated equipping of clergy and laity with the necessary skills and resources to carry out the work and the successful results. Participants will evaluate resources and workshops. Finally, parishes that have developed a plan for Witness and Communication ministries will be identified and monitored.

Proposal Expenditures

1. Travel and meeting expenses for training workshops and seminars
2. Expenses for staff
3. Costs of production and publications of materials and resources